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Bangalore Mirror

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WALK ON

60 walkers set off on 15-km-long hike across Whitefield to understand how robust are area's footpaths

PAGE 4

PLAYING CARDS

Expert suggests ways to minimise credit-card-related frauds — and this applies to those without plastic money too

PAGE 5

Walkers notice group inspecting Cubbon Park one fine day — though hush-hush, talk is that plan is afoot for private entity to set up Art Park in city's favourite lung space

ART FOR FARCE'S SAKE

'Project will eat into 3-5 acres of land, several trees and habitat of reptiles'

| Y Maheswara Reddy
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The proposal for a private entity to set up an Art Park in Cubbon Park has caused major concern. It is alleged that if authorities and the private entity go ahead with their plan, Cubbon Park is set to lose three to five acres of land and also many well-grown trees. It is believed the land is a home for a number of snakes and reptiles.

A few walkers, who visited the Deputy Director of Horticulture (Cubbon Park) Office last week happened to see a group of people inspecting a portion of the land near the Deputy Director's Office. "I asked one of the people inspecting the land about the purpose of the inspection. He told me the inspection is meant for establishing an Art Park. Later, I enquired with the Horticulture Department officials but they feigned ignorance. I suspect the authorities and the private entity are trying to keep the proposal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

A portion of the land where an Art Park is to be established

"The park belongs to us, the citizens. This is non-negotiable. Leave the park alone. The park is for all of us as a park, where one can enjoy nature and rejuvenate yourself in your own way

— Thanmaya BP, Cubbon Park regular

RO plants in the radar

Outbreak of GBS in Maharashtra has experts calling for closer look at quality of water being sold at plants in unlabelled bottles

| Sridhar.Vivan
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Should privately-run Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants in the city and state be scrutinised? With Maharashtra, particularly Pune, witnessing a Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) outbreak, experts in Karnataka have pointed out that many RO plants sold water in unlabelled jars and bottles without government oversight.

According to a Times of India report, while the Food and Drug Administration in Maharashtra regulated labeled water bottles, there was no authority monitoring RO plants. Now, with GBS linked to waterborne Campylobacter infection, these plants are in the radar.

Activists in the city said that although Bengaluru has not reported any recent GBS cases, it would be prudent to learn from Maharashtra's experience and begin monitoring these plants for water quality to prevent potential outbreaks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Musical tribute

The Mahindra Percussion Festival returns this year with a music festival honoring the legendary Ustad Zakir Hussain. This special edition event will feature renowned percussionists from around the world. **Where: Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte; When: March 1 and 2**

02 Handicraft exhibition

Discover the Grand Flea Market's handicrafts exhibition and sale, where you can shop from a curated selection of handmade crafts, handloom fabrics, and home décor items by artisans from across India. The exhibition showcases a diverse range of products, each reflecting the unique cultural heritage of different regions. **Where: Chitrakala Parishat; When: February 7 to 23**

03 Natural art

Learn traditional Indian dyeing techniques using flowers, leaves, and natural extracts from Krutika Mohan, a nature artist and educator, in her workshop on natural dyeing. **Where: Go Native, Jayanagar; When: February 23**

04 Learn Sanskrit

Amrita School of Spiritual and Cultural Studies, Amritapuri Campus, is launching an online Sanskrit language learning certificate program which will cover the fundamentals of Sanskrit, including letters, sentence writing, and translation. **Where: Online; When: Commencing in March**

05 Play time

KAMALAKSHI: A play in English by renowned dance scholar, musicologist, and writer Sujatha Vijayaraghavan, Kamalakshi tells the story of a Devadasi dancer in the late 19th century. The play is directed by PC Ramakrishna. **Where: Chowdiah Memorial Hall; When: Feb 28; 7 pm**

Athletes defy stigma, run for country on global stage

2 sportswomen living with HIV supported by Bangalore Sports Foundation compete at international marathon event

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Sonika and Bharathi have participated in 30 marathons across the country

Two Indian athletes recently represented India at a global sporting stage, competing at the Pokhara International Marathon in Nepal. Sonika and Bharathi, two young athletes born and living with HIV, supported by the Bangalore Schools Sports Foundation through the Champion in Me project, have been competing in marathons for a decade, fulfilling the foundation's vision of empowering and enabling children and youth living with HIV.

Currently, Bharathi is pursuing her first-year degree through distance education, while Sonika continues to train and compete with dedication. Both the athletes have participated in over 30 marathons across different states in India. As they step onto an international stage, they hope to use their platform to advocate for children and youth living with HIV.

The Pokhara International Marathon had around 10,000 participants across various categories, including a full marathon (42 km), a half marathon (21 km), a 10 km run, and special 5 km run, for senior citizens, children, and people with disabilities. International participants from 21 countries took part in the event. Among them, Bharathi and Sonika were the two athletes with HIV, who put out a clear message that those with HIV can compete equally without stigma or discrimination.

> **"They have reached the international level with a message that they want equality, inclusion, justice**
> – Elvis Joseph, Bangalore Schools Sports Foundation

Elvis Joseph, Founder and Director of the Bangalore Schools Sports Foundation, Project Champion in Me, said that Bharathi and Sonika have been part of the program since 2015. "Over the years, they have trained hard and competed in marathons across India. Now, they have reached the international level with a strong message that they want equality, inclusion, justice, and better opportunities for children and young adults living with HIV," he said. He stated that this achievement by them serves as an inspiration to thousands of girls living with HIV in India and across the world, proving that determination and opportunity can break barriers and redefine possibilities. He said that he hopes that the Indian government will recognize the Champion in Me program and provide the support needed to expand its reach. With the right backing, he expressed that the initiative can uplift more young people like Sonika and Bharathi, enabling them to achieve their dreams and live a life free from stigma and discrimination.

Bharati highlighted that one of the biggest issues the athletes face is neglect. "In India, a large number of young adults aged 19 to 29 live with HIV. However, government agencies, organisations, and international bodies have done very little to support them," she said. She opined that there are no structured programs focusing on their health, education, life skills, employment, sports, arts, and culture. Without these support systems, many young people living with HIV struggle with personal and professional challenges.

The two athletes said that running marathons has given them a new perspective on life. They affirmed that sports have made them mentally and physically strong, instilling courage, hope, and resilience.

Plastic out, cloth bag in: Jayanagar market's vendors make green switch

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Over 15 volunteers joined hands to create awareness among the public and street vendors on the importance of avoiding plastic bags on Sunday at Jayanagar Flower and Vegetable Market. The volunteers launched the 'Flaunt Your Cloth Bag' programme in which they taught the street vendors to make paper bags. They also distributed paper bags and cloth bags made from pre-loved clothes and curtains.

The programme was organised by The Indian Ploggers Army in association with Swabhiman and Helping Heroes. Notably, on February 9, The Indian Ploggers Army volunteers had removed 15 bags of rubbish in one hour on February 9 from Jayanagar Shopping Complex premises.

Plog Raja, an environmentalist and the founder of The Indian Ploggers Army, emphasised on the need to avoid using plastic bags. He said that people often want to flaunt their outfits and other accessories. "I think it's high time to carry a cloth bag and flaunt it too. It's the best fashion statement one can make! Imagine byoc becoming a part of life and not just a fancy tagline. Together let's make that small little change which can go a long way," he said.

"We approached both street vendors and passersby to educate them on the need to minimize the use of plastic, as a sustainable solution we provided very good quality cloth bags stitched from leftover curtain cloth material," Younes Matheen, one of the volunteers, said. He opined that the fight against the indiscriminate use of plastic was taken to the streets on Saturday. He said that the effort to promote paper bags along with cloth bags was well received. He also pointed out that such activities will have to be regularly carried out to see visible changes in the mindset of shoppers.

Shravani Kalkonda, a volunteer, said that she always carries her bag whenever she goes shopping and encourages others to do the same. While talking about the awareness programme, she said that it was a nice experience educating street vendors. "We received smiles from everywhere. An auto driver approached me, curious to know the little "drama" we were creating-distributing the cloth and paper bags, making shayari's with wide smiles. When I explained him that we were doing this to spread awareness on cloth bags as plastic ones are harmful on both our health and the environment, he appreciated my broken Kannada and asked if he could take a bag for his wife- so that she can take it whenever she goes out for shopping," she said.

Volunteers at Jayanagar Flower & Vegetable Market; (Right) One of the volunteers interacting with a street vendor at the market

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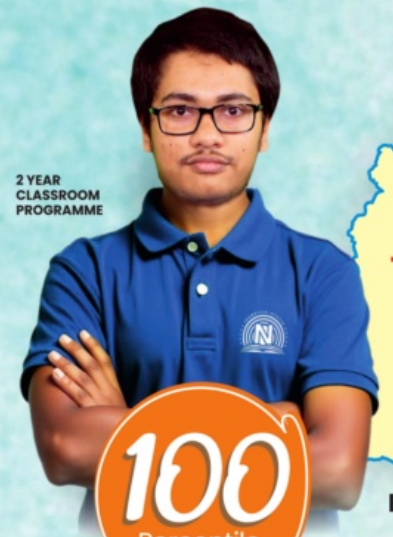

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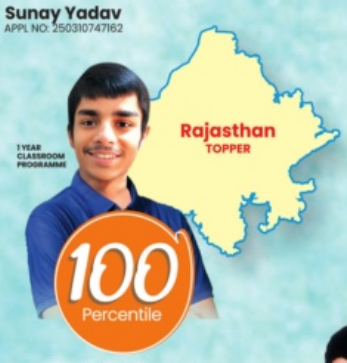

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Does Whitefield walk the line? Citizens check it out

More than 60 walkers from across city walk 15 km to rate and assess walkability, find area is doing okay

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Citizens go on a 15-km footpath walk at Whitefield on Saturday

A diverse group of around 60 walkers set off from Mahadevapura Police Station on a 15-kilometre footpath walk on Saturday, with a mission to test the pedestrian infrastructure. The walkers assessed its walkability and learned more about the history and significance of the multiple landmarks of the fast-growing suburban area of Bengaluru.

Curated and led by Arun Pai, founder of BangaloreWALKS, this was 'Walk No 18' of the #BLRFootpathChallenge, which has covered over 125 kms of the city's footpath network in the past 75 days to rate them for walkability.

The walkers included senior citizens, high school students, government officers, and BBMP Marshals amongst a diverse group of citizens of all ages and professional backgrounds, from all over Bengaluru.

Tracing the story of these settlements, many of which date to over a 1000 years ago, the walkers explored Krishnarajapura, Dyavasandra, Singayyanapalya, Garudacharpalya, Hoodi, Nallurhalli and Kadugodi. Despite drastic urbanization, most of these areas are retained in public memory because of the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited's decision to name metro stations after the original names of areas they are located in.

From its laidback agricultural past, to the industrial-estate era leading up to the fast-paced digital present, the walkers got a first-hand experience of the various layers of history present along the route. "I did not know much about Whitefield. The programme helped me to know more about Whitefield," said Abhinav Jandhyala, a student.

The 15-km footpath walk started at Singayyanapalya Metro Station and followed the Metro Purple Line until Kadugodi Tree Park, with a few detours into Dyavasandra and Nallurhalli. The important junctions covered along the route included Hoodi, Graphite India, Vydehi, Nallurhalli and ITPL, and the areas with the maximum footfall and pedestrian traffic along the Metro alignment.

One of the highlights of the walk was the walkers' continuing quest for 'wide footpaths' across Bengaluru. They discovered several locations where the footpath width could accommodate 10 or more pedestrians walking alongside. For many of the walkers who had come from other areas of the city, this was an unexpected pleasant surprise. "I am very happy to take part in the walk. It is amazing. I find the footpaths of Whitefield are better than those in HSR Layout," said Uma Mani, a resident of HSR 7th Sector.

> **"I am very happy to take part in the walk. It is amazing. I find the footpaths of Whitefield are better than those in HSR Layout**
> – Uma Mani, HSR Layout resident

The walkers were also asked to do the Footpath Obstacle Score, a count of the number of obstacles that made them leave the footpath over the 15 km route. The consensus view was that there were no more than 15 obstacles, or an average of 1 obstacle per km, which compares with the best footpaths in the central areas of the city. The walkers were also asked to do a GST Score, which involved counting the number of G (garbage spots), S (shops that block the footpath) and T (trenches) or missing footpath slabs.

A unanimous verdict from the walkers revealed that there was 1 garbage spot, 7 to 8 shops that block the footpath and 5 to 6 trenches, and up to 15 obstacles. All of these were identified and the information was provided to the Mahadevapura Task Force which will coordinate with the various government agencies involved to fix them. A review walk will be conducted after a few weeks to assess improvements.

Full speed ahead: 1,700 km of roads to be concretised

Bengaluru is set to have around 1,700 km length of roads concretised in a few years. In spite of criticism from some quarters, the white-topping projects will continue in the city.

After inspecting ongoing white-topping projects across Bengaluru, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar told the media, "The project includes 150 kms of roads across 97 stretches, divided into 14 packages. Coordination between BWSSB, BBMP, BDA, and BESCOM is being ensured to build permanent roads." He said that provisions are being made for underground cables and power lines to prevent future road digging, and all necessary infrastructure is being incorporated into the construction. He highlighted that the white-topping is being undertaken to construct international-standard roads in the city with a lifespan of 30 years, under the Brand Bengaluru's seamless mobility initiative. "The project is being executed at an estimated cost of ₹1,700 crore," he added.

He stressed that maintaining quality is a priority, and work needs to progress swiftly. "I conducted an inspection today to ensure that work is progressing at the required pace. The completion timeline for this phase is set at 11 months. In the second phase, an additional 450 kms of roads will undergo white topping. Once all phases are completed, Bengaluru will have a total of 1,700 km of white-topped roads," he said. Additionally, he mentioned plans to complete stormwater drain works across the city. "We are not claiming that all changes will happen overnight. Projects are being executed in phases, keeping financial feasibility in mind," he opined.

Commenting on inspection of the project quality, he said, "The ₹1,700 crore allocated for this project must be fully utilised for road construction. The roads must meet the required thickness, and BWSSB's works should be completed alongside road construction. Hence, I am personally inspecting the progress." He also stated that the quality checks will continue even after completion of the project. "Most of the work is of high quality, but I noticed a minor deviation in one location, and I have instructed a technical team to reassess it," he added. **— BMB**

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Dog menace
RKM Layout

Margondanahalli residents face rising stray dog menace, and have urged immediate action from BBMP.

Leaf pileup
Abbigere

At Abbigere Park (Ward 12), the walking path and exercise area are covered with dried leaves due to the lack of housekeeping and maintenance.

Dangerous intersection
Railway Parallel Road

The intersection of Railway Parallel Road and Badaganadu Sangha Road, near Tata Consumer Products Ltd, has been a hazard for two-wheelers for months. Authorities must address this issue urgently.

Don't have a credit card? Beware, you can still be a target

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Follow these steps to activate credit card, say fraudsters to dupe tech professional of Rs 98,000

In a case of phishing, an IT professional ended up losing Rs 98,264 in a credit card fraud. The irony is that she doesn't own a credit card. The victim, who holds a salary account with a private bank, was eligible for a credit card based on her company policies.

However, she had never received the card. On January 15, she received a call from an unknown number, with the caller claiming to be a representative from the bank.

"The caller told me that my credit card needed activation and that if I didn't complete the process immediately, money would be deducted from my account. I panicked and followed their instructions," the victim recounted in complaint.

The fraudsters instructed her to click on a link they provided and download a suspicious app, under the pretense of verifying her identity. She followed the steps, but shortly after, the call was disconnected. Within minutes, she started receiving SMS alerts about multiple transactions being made from her credit card, totaling Rs 98,264. Shocked, she checked her details and discovered that her card had been compromised.

Realising that she had been duped, she immediately contacted the bank and filed a formal complaint in Annapoorneshwari Nagar police station on January 18. She also approached the cybercrime cell, urging authorities to take legal action against those responsible for the fraudulent transactions.

Cybersecurity experts warn that fraudsters are using increasingly sophisticated tactics to deceive people, even those who may not be actively using their credit cards. "Scammers exploit fear and urgency to make victims act hastily.

They often impersonate legitimate banking officials and use fake websites or mobile applications to steal sensitive information," said Chetan Anand, National Cyber Security Scholar and Cybercrime Intervention Officer. Chetan Anand advised that citizens must first verify and then trust in this digital age. "Fraudsters use social engineering techniques to defraud the victims.

The real issue is that the fraudsters convince you to do tasks without their active involvement in the act. By the time the act is carried out, it is too late and the person would have already become a victim," he said.

Chetan Anand advised good practices such as not to divulge personal and financial information to strangers.

"Credit card holders need to verify with the bank first before trusting the callers. Credit card holders must take note not to click on phishing links. They must never download apps from such suspicious links. The malicious apps steal money and personal information, he said. Credit card holders can avail card protection plans to protect their credit card from financial frauds," he said.

Police officials recommend that individuals never click on unknown links, download apps from unofficial sources, or share OTPs and personal details over the phone.

Banks also advise customers to verify any suspicious calls directly with their respective bank branches.

Victims of such scams should immediately report incidents to the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in) or dial the cyber helpline at 1930 for prompt assistance.

BM Finance Fundas

**Trade pact:** Announcement of India-US trade agreement has boosted biz confidence, says Piyush Goyal

Buying a car? Find out how much car loan to take

Buying a house stands out as a pivotal financial choice, and for many individuals, the second significant financial decision revolves around purchasing a car. A common approach to fund this vehicle acquisition is through obtaining a loan. Presently, the interest rates for car loans are at their lowest in recent times.

This story will tell you the factors that should be taken into account when determining the appropriate amount for a car loan.

How much loan can you get?

Financial institutions, including both banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), typically extend loans amounting to around 80 percent of the on-road price of a car. In specific instances, some lenders may approve loans covering the entire 100 percent of the car's cost. The pivotal factor influencing the car loan amount is the Loan to Value (LTV) ratio established by the lender.

The LTV ratio denotes the percentage or share of the car's total cost that the lender is willing to finance. The borrower is responsible for covering the remaining portion of the car's cost from their own financial resources.

Although a majority of lenders offer LTV ratios of up to 80 percent, certain lenders assert the ability to provide loans covering the entire 100 percent of the car's cost.

EMI payments

When obtaining a car loan, it is crucial to select equated monthly instalments (EMIs) that align with your repayment capacity. Avoid choosing a lower EMI amount and a more extended loan tenure simply because it's available as an option; opt for such terms only if they match your financial capabilities. This caution is warranted because opting for a lower EMI and a longer loan tenure

can lead to unnecessarily higher interest expenses.

Conversely, refrain from selecting higher EMIs if it means compromising your monthly contributions towards essential financial objectives. Regardless of the loan amount, it's imperative to prioritize EMIs that are comfortably manageable and do not strain your financial resources.

For instance, if you are buying a car valued at Rs 15 lakh, do you have enough savings to make the down payment of at least Rs 7 lakh? Say you opt for a loan for the rest, i.e., Rs 8 lakh, what is a comfortable EMI amount for you? A high CIBIL score (750 and above) can help you secure a higher loan amount and better interest rates. For individuals with a credit score of above 750, banks generally cover up to 80 to 90 per cent of the total cost of the vehicle. However, funding a maximum amount as a down payment is recommended as it reduces the high - value EMI payments.

Therefore, even if you qualify for a higher Loan to Value (LTV) ratio, consider choosing a lower LTV ratio. Opting for a reduced LTV ratio can alleviate your EMI burden and lower the overall interest expenses associated with the car purchase. Car loan applicants are advised to aim for a lower LTV ratio, striking a balance that doesn't compromise liquidity and financial reserves earmarked for significant life goals.

Ideally, the cumulative EMIs from all loans should not exceed 40 percent of your take-home pay. Considering your present circumstances, you can determine the portion of this 40 percent allocation that your car EMI can occupy.

Besides, there are several things to consider before you opt for the right kind of car loan.

What is the 20/10/4 rule when taking a car loan

1. **This is a thumb rule used while buying a car on a loan.**
2. **20% of the onroad price of the car should be paid as down payment while booking the vehicle.**
3. **The EMI should not be more than 10% of the monthly income.**
4. **The loan tenure should be for a maximum of four years.**

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Too little, too late: Rare disorder patients suffer

Patients' advocacy groups write to PM demanding removal of cap of ₹50 lakh for treatment, inclusion of ASMD in notified diseases list

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ASMD (Acid Sphingomyelinase Deficiency), also known as Niemann Pick Type A and Type B, is a rare genetic disorder caused by mutations leading to a deficiency of the enzyme acid sphingomyelinase (ASM).

However, it is not included in India's National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD) 2021, despite it being a life-threatening and debilitating ultra-rare disorder. There is also significant clinical evidence that if patients get necessary treatment, they will lead near-normal lives like in the other diseases. Navintara Kamath, co-founder & director, Niemann-Pick Disease Charitable Trust, pointed out as per scientific reports, the global estimated prevalence of Niemann-Pick disease types A and B is around 1 in 2,50,000 individuals.

In India, 32 patients, diagnosed with this condition by the Centres of Excellence (CoEs), have registered themselves with the national crowdfunding platform for rare diseases.

Presently ASMD is not a notified disease condition under the NPRD 2021. However, it is a treatable condition, just like other disorders. "Like Gaucher disease, Pompe disease, Fabry disease, MPS 1, and MPS 2 which are notified conditions under the National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021, classified under Group 3 (a). Article 21 of the Constitution also states the right to health and medical care as a fundamental right. Recent advancements have transformed ASMD into a treatable condition as it necessitates a similar treatment approach which is– Enzyme Replacement Therapy (ERT). There are patients receiving ERT through various private funding channels, and they are living a near-normal life," said Kamath.

"Initial investments in the well-being of patients are wasted if continuity is not maintained – Navintara Kamath

The Ministry came up with NPRD 2021 that aims to address these issues of eligible rare disease patients. In May 2022, the government amended the NPRD 2021 and announced Rs 50 lakh monetary aid. However, its implementation remains inadequate, leaving many patients without access to life-saving treatments. "These diseases are degenerative and without continued treatment the cells start to degenerate. Initial investments in the well-being of patients are wasted if continuity is not maintained. LSDs as per NPRD 2021 are categorised under Group 3 (a) disorders, for which DCGI-approved Enzyme Replace Therapy (ERT) is available and has been proven to be the most effective therapy in India.

In January-end, the Patient Advocacy Groups (PAGs), wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address critical challenges in the implementation of NPRD 2021. The letter stated, "While NPRD 2021 has been a commendable step forward, gaps in implementation have left many patients without adequate support. These challenges include discontinuation of treatment after the one time funding support up to Rs 50 lakh is exhausted, restricted access to life-saving therapies like Enzyme Replacement Therapies for notified conditions like Pompe, MPS, and Fabry, and delay in the rollout of the proposed National Programme. The delay in rolling out the proposed 974 crore national program on rare diseases has exacerbated these challenges, leaving patients, most of whom are children, in dire circumstances. Approximately 38 patients from three Centers of Excellence (CoEs) have been running from pillar to post after exhausting their one-time financial support of Rs 50 lakh..."

They demanded that the cap of providing one-time support for patients diagnosed with chronic, ultra-rare disorders like LSDs be removed. Other demands include resolution of delays in procurement and disbursement of funds at CoEs. "Include ASMD as a notified condition under NPRD 2021 to ensure that eligible patients have access to life-saving therapy. And set up a stringent monitoring mechanism to address administrative bottlenecks and ensure accountability at all levels of NPRD implementation..." is one of the other demands.

Khushi Fertility and IVF Centre inaugurated

Khushi Fertility & IVF Centre was inaugurated in the city on Sunday by Jagadguru Sri Sri Sri Shivaratri Deshikendra Shivacharya Mahaswamiji opposite Vegacity Mall on Bannerghatta Road, 3rd Phase, JP Nagar. Centre's Founder Dr. Rashmi Yogish said there is a growing need for a fertility care centre that provides comprehensive and multidisciplinary treatment due to declining fertility rates caused by factors such as advanced age, lifestyle changes, and an increase in autoimmune and endocrine issues. She stated that Khushi Fertility & IVF Centre aims to provide fertility treatment while also focusing on psychological and emotional support, drawing from years of experience in the field. In his inaugural address, Jagadguru Sri Sri Sri Shivaratri Deshikendra Shivacharya Mahaswamiji said the facility would contribute to improving fertility care in the state.

— BMB

Suburban Rail: HC okays removal of 2,518 trees

The High Court has granted permission for the removal of 2,518 trees in the city, with 1,988 trees allocated to Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited for its suburban rail project and 530 trees for the expansion of Air Force Command Hospital.

The court mandated that both KRIDE and the hospital must follow the Karnataka Preservation of Trees Act, 1976, along with Rules of 1977. Additionally, they must adhere to conditions set by the BBMP tree officer and the court, including compensatory afforestation. This order was issued by a division bench on interlocutory applications for both projects.

'Plant 10 saplings for each tree felled'

The court specified a requirement of planting ten saplings for each tree removed. Consequently, the hospital must plant 5,380 trees to compensate for the 530 trees to be felled. The hospital, operating under the Ministry of Defence, submitted its application to construct an advanced 800-bed hospital complex at Ulsoor.

Rail project

For the Suburban Rail Project's Corridor 4, K-RIDE needs to remove and relocate trees as per the tree officer's directive. The project spans from Ambedkarnagar to Channasandra railway station (Block-1) and extends to Muddenahalli Line Cross (Block-2). An expert committee found unauthorised felling of 528 trees, including 226 in Block 2. The court addressed the unauthorised tree felling by requiring K-RIDE to plant an additional 5,000 saplings beyond those permitted for removal.

— BMB

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

In a wheelchair

The Invest Karnataka 2025 summit witnessed an unexpected moment as Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, recovering from a knee injury, arrived on stage in a wheelchair. Having been on rest for the past 10 days, the CM made his presence felt despite the discomfort, with a specially arranged ramp ensuring smooth access to the stage. In a display of resilience, Siddaramaiah stepped out of his wheelchair to light the ceremonial lamp, taking a few steps with the support of his aides and cabinet colleagues. To make his time on stage more comfortable, a special cushion was placed for him. Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Pralhad Joshi swiftly ascended the stage when invited, while other dignitaries patiently waited for the CM to make his way.

Kumbh & Aero India

At the Aero India inauguration last week, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh made an interesting comparison between the event and the Kumbh Mela. He invoked the phrase Atithi Devo Bhava (a guest is equivalent to God), highlighting how it resonates at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. "While the Maha Kumbh is the Kumbh of introspection, Aero India is the Kumbh of innovation," he said. "While the Maha Kumbh focuses on inner strength, Aero India is all about showcasing our external might. And while the Maha Kumbh celebrates India's culture, Aero India will flaunt India's power," he added.

New time, new troubles

At Invest Karnataka 2025, former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, took a trip down memory lane, reminiscing about the early days of India's economic reforms. He recalled how, in 1991, pushing for reforms was relatively straightforward because the world spoke a "single language". "We initiated reforms when Eastern Europe had moved past communism. The path was clear—integrating with the global market was the only way forward. But today, things are far more complicated," he observed. Ahluwalia painted a picture of an increasingly fractured geopolitical landscape—rising tensions, a divided West, and shifting alliances. The US now grapples with challenges, not just with rivals like China but even with close allies like Canada and Mexico. Meanwhile, China is strengthening ties with Russia, making Moscow more dependent on Beijing, while Europe remains wary of Russia but relatively untroubled by China. "India is now navigating a world that has suddenly become fragmented," he said. "Back in 1991, we didn't have this problem at all."

Don't try to manage

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar was recently announcing the Cabinet Sub-Committee decision on the financial situation of state universities. He said that due to the prioritisation of University of Mysore in regions like Mandya and Chamarajanagar, admissions in other universities saw a decline. When he was asked if universities would be closed if necessary, a visibly angry DyCM replied, "I cannot respond to your question in such a manner. Your efforts will not force me to say certain things. Don't try to manage me like others. We will make decisions keeping the state, universities, and students in mind. There is no personal agenda in this. The future of students is the priority. Professors are reluctant to go to Mandya and Chamarajanagar due to their seniority and pension benefits."

CM's wish

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has expressed his intent to surpass this record and continue his tenure as Chief Minister. In a recent interview with a Kannada news channel, Siddaramaiah's comments created a stir in political circles. His statements have sparked speculation about whether he intends to complete his current term and whether he plans to contest the 2028 elections. He said, "I had initially desired to retire from electoral politics. However, my well-wishers and supporters are urging me to remain active in politics. Being with the people is what I enjoy the most," Siddaramaiah remarked.

— Sridhar Vivan

BM SIMPLY PUT

STOPPED: CARE Journal Listing

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to discontinue the UGC-CARE (Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics) journal listing. This decision was taken during the Commission's 584th meeting on October 3, 2024, based on recommendations from an expert committee. The move aims to empower Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to establish their own mechanisms for evaluating the quality of research publications rather than relying on a centralised list. This development raises several key questions regarding the rationale behind the decision, its implications for researchers, and the future of academic publishing in India.

What was the purpose of the UGC-CARE list, and why was it introduced?

The UGC-CARE list was introduced in 2018 to ensure that only reputable journals were recognised for faculty appointments, promotions, and research funding applications. It was designed to curb the proliferation of predatory journals and maintain the quality of academic publications.

Why has UGC decided to discontinue the CARE journal listing?

The decision stems from various challenges associated with the centralized listing system, including delays in updating journal statuses, lack of transparency in selection criteria, and instances where predatory journals were mistakenly included while reputable ones were excluded. The new approach aims to provide more flexibility and academic freedom in journal selection.

Who is responsible for evaluating research journals now?

With the discontinuation of the UGC-CARE list, HEIs will now be responsible for establishing their own mechanisms to assess the credibility and quality of journals. These institutional frameworks will align with the suggestive parameters provided by UGC while allowing for discipline-specific and evolving research needs.

Where can faculty members and researchers find guidance on journal selection?

UGC has outlined a set of indicative parameters for evaluating research journals, which are now available for public review. Researchers and faculty members can access these guidelines and provide feedback until February 25, 2025.

When will this new system take effect?

The transition from the centralized UGC-CARE list to an institution-led evaluation system is expected to take effect following the finalization of the suggestive parameters. The public consultation phase will conclude on February 25, 2025, after which HEIs will begin implementing their own mechanisms.

How will this decision impact researchers and academic institutions?

According to UGC, this shift offers greater academic freedom by allowing researchers to publish in a wider range of reputable journals without being restricted to a predefined list. However, it also places greater responsibility on institutions to establish credible mechanisms for evaluating journals. HEIs that fail to do so risk compromising their academic integrity and reputation.

SC: Palace Ground land ruling not negotiable

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The Supreme Court recently firmly directed Karnataka's administration regarding its earlier ruling on transferable development rights for Srikantadatta Narasimharaja Wadiyar's legal heir concerning Bangalore Palace ground land, intended for Bellary and Jayamahal Roads expansion, stating it was binding and required implementation.

"We have passed the order, it is non negotiable. Your officers would be in soup, if the order is not implemented," stated Justices MM Sundresh and Aravind Kumar to senior advocate Kapil Sibal and Karnataka's Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty, who indicated the government's new Ordinance and decision against using the disputed land.

Sibal explained to the bench that the acquisition plans had been abandoned, stating they couldn't proceed whilst the Ordinance remained active and unchallenged.

The applicants' representatives, senior advocates A K Ganguli, Madhavi Divan and Gopal Sankaranarayanan, argued that the Ordinance's issuance directly contradicted the Supreme Court's directive, noting it came after the court's six-week implementation period. Sibal noted the State government's previous success in the High Court appeal, with the primary case still awaiting resolution. The court scheduled the matter for review in two weeks, requiring BBMP and BDA Commissioners to attend the next hearing.

The administration had previously stated that issuing TDR certificates for 15 acres 39 guntas would create 13,91,742 square feet of additional construction area in Bengaluru, approximately valued at Rs 1,396 crore after 60% guidance value reduction.

On January 29, 2025, Karnataka enacted the Bangalore Palace (Utilisation and Regulation of Land) Ordinance 2025.

Hallmark centre staffers steal gold

The Halasuru Gate police have arrested two men for allegedly stealing gold ornaments meant for hallmarking, amounting to 2.5 kg over the past three months.

The accused, identified as Mahabir Burjar and Manish Prajapat, who hail from Rajasthan, were employed at a hallmarking centre. Several jewellery shops in the city regularly sent gold ornaments for hallmarking, trusting the process to ensure purity and authenticity.

However, the duo exploited this system by systematically stealing portions of the jewellery before escaping to Rajasthan with the stolen gold. Their thefts went unnoticed until jewellery shop owners reported discrepancies, prompting an investigation by the Halasuru Gate police. A case was registered, and the accused were traced and arrested.

Actor faces second harassment case

TV actor Charith Balappa alias Dhruvanth, has been accused in yet another sexual harassment case. A complaint has been registered against him at the Annapoorneshwari Nagar police station, alleging blackmail, extortion, and sexual harassment.

According to the complaint, Dhruvanth allegedly manipulated a woman who had visited a film shoot by pretending to be in love with her. He later married another woman but reportedly coerced the complainant into having a relationship with both him and his wife. When she refused, he allegedly used private photos to blackmail her, extorted money, and subjected her to sexual harassment.

Since the filing of the complaint, Charith Balappa has gone missing. Police have launched a search operation to trace him.

Farmer leader airlifted to B'luru

Farmer leader Kurubur Shantakumar, who sustained serious injuries in a road accident near Patiala, Punjab, has been airlifted to Bengaluru for advanced medical treatment. He was brought to the city via an ICAT air ambulance, which landed at HAL Airport around 2:30 PM.

Shantakumar, the president of the State Sugarcane Cultivators Association, suffered severe spinal injuries in the accident, which occurred on Friday. Initially admitted to a hospital in Patiala, his condition prompted urgent medical attention.

Upon learning of the incident, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah instructed officials to arrange for his immediate transfer to Bengaluru. Following his arrival, Shantakumar was directly admitted to a hospital for further treatment.

Man pushes wife from building

A man killed his wife by pushing her from the second floor of an under-construction building in Chowdadenahalli, Anekal taluk following a domestic dispute.

The deceased has been identified as Manjula (40), while the accused is her husband, Manjunath (45). According to reports, Manjula was suffering from mental health issues, which had caused Manjunath significant distress. On the day of the incident, an argument between the couple escalated, leading to a tragic outcome. In a fit of rage, Manjunath allegedly dragged Manjula on his shoulders and threw her off the second floor of the building. She suffered severe head injuries and was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to her injuries on the way. The Sarjapur police have registered a case and are investigating the matter further.

All eyes on Cubbon Park

A group of people inspecting Cubbon Park for the proposed project

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of establishing the Art Park secret. I suspect the proposal to establish the Art Park has already been discussed with the authorities concerned. I have seen people carrying maps and a copy of the project report of the Art Park," said TL Ramesh, a resident of Vasanth Nagar.

Demanding that the authorities cancel the proposal of establishing the Art Park, a devoted protector of Cubbon Park has said the sacredness and integrity of Cubbon Park seems to be constantly under assault. "Cubbon Park has been eroded over time by a number of different organisations. It is the sacred greenery, biodiversity and public space that need to be protected.

Let's improve, maintain, conserve but please let us not commercialise or change. Let us just leave Cubbon Park alone," she said.

Expressing a similar opinion, Thanmaya BP, a consultant who has been visiting Cubbon Park for many years, said that he was one of the people who visited the Horticulture Department Office last week when a group of people conducted a survey of the park. "The area being surveyed was between Kasturba Road and KSLTA. When we made enquiries with them, they responded that they are doing a survey for an 'Art Park' within the confines of Cubbon Park," said Thanmaya.

He insisted that no private entity can stake claim to Cubbon Park. "The park belongs to us, the citizens. This is non-negotiable. Leave the park alone. The park is for all of us as a park, where one can enjoy nature and rejuvenate yourself in your own way. Is the horticulture department allowing a privately funded entity to set up structures inside the park? Is the horticulture department giving away public land, which is Bangalore's lung space to a private entity?" Thanmaya asked.

Coming down heavily on the horticulture department for allowing private people to conduct a survey for the Art Park, S Umesh, president, Cubbon Park Walkers' Association, said that he would organise a massive protest if the authorities allow private entities to establish the Art Park. "We oppose construction of any type of structures in Cubbon Park," he said.

Periodic inspection of RO plants a must, say experts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In Pune, after GBS cases started rising, officials tested water from private RO units. Samples from 25 out of 30 surveyed plants in the affected areas were found to be contaminated.

Avinash Kumar, an activist, said, "Bengaluru has a large number of privately-run RO plants, and most of them operate without regular quality checks. While we have not seen GBS cases linked to water contamination here, the outbreak in Maharashtra is a wake-up call. Waterborne infections can spread silently, and by the time they are detected, the damage is already done. It is crucial that we proactively test and regulate these plants to ensure they meet safety standards."

Nitya D, another activist said many people rely on RO water, assuming it is safe, but without proper monitoring, there is no way to guarantee this. "The government must conduct periodic inspections, enforce labelling requirements, and hold plant operators accountable to prevent any future health crises. Prevention is always better than reacting to an outbreak," Nitya said.

What causes GBS?

Doctors explained that it occurs when an infection, such as gastroenteritis or diarrhea, triggers the body's immune system to attack the protective myelin sheath surrounding the nerves.

This leads to nerve damage, often starting with weakness in the legs, which can spread to the upper body and, in severe cases, affect breathing, requiring ventilatory support.

Although the exact cause of GBS remains unclear, it is frequently associated with infections. Experts noted that viral infections like influenza, Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), and Zika virus, as well as bacterial infections such as Campylobacter jejuni—commonly found in contaminated poultry, undercooked meat, and unpasteurised dairy—can trigger the condition. He also mentioned that while rare, GBS has been linked to vaccinations, though the risk is considerably lower than that from infections. Other possible triggers include surgery, trauma, or bone marrow transplants.

"GBS can affect individuals of all ages but is more common in older adults. The incidence increases by about 20% with every decade of life, and people over 65 face a higher risk of severe complications and prolonged recovery.

To reduce the risk of GBS, we advised general precautions such as consuming boiled or bottled water, washing fruits and vegetables thoroughly, cooking poultry and meat properly, and avoiding raw or undercooked foods, including salads, eggs, kebabs, and seafood," said a doctor.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I Pradeep Singh R/o 2682, Diagonal Road, HAL 3rd Stage, Bengaluru, have changed my minor daughter's name from Parineeti Singh to Parineeti Kumari
Parineeti Kumari for all future purposes.

OBITUARY

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

With a heavy heart, we inform the passing of Doddachannappa Srinivasa Murthy on 01/02/2025. Kindly keep him in your prayers for eternal peace.
-Hemaltha (Spouse) and family members

Karnataka leads in desertification among South Indian states

Karnataka has the highest extent of desertified land in South India, with 6,959,847 hectares under desertification and degradation, according to the latest data. This accounts for 7.11% of India's total desertified land, which stands at 97,854,851 hectares. The widespread land degradation poses significant challenges, impacting agriculture, water resources, and the state's ecological balance.

On a national scale, Karnataka ranks fifth in terms of total desertified land. Rajasthan leads the list with 2,12,37,669 hectares, followed by Maharashtra (1,43,06,029 hectares), Gujarat (1,02,48,057 hectares), and Ladakh (71,11,968 hectares). While Rajasthan and Gujarat have vast arid and semi-arid regions that naturally contribute to desertification, Karnataka's growing land degradation calls for urgent sustainable land management, afforestation, and soil conservation efforts.

In a recent Rajya Sabha response, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh cited the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India (2021) by the Space Applications Centre (ISRO), which states that 29.77% of India's total geographic area is affected by degradation. To combat this, the government has introduced several initiatives, including:

Singh said, "As part of its commitment to global climate action, India pledged to restore 13 million hectares of degraded land by 2020 and an additional 8 million hectares by 2030 under the Bonn Challenge. This target was later increased to 26 million hectares during COP-14 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2019. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – India is responsible for monitoring India's progress.

Additionally, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is implementing several afforestation programs, including the National Mission for a Green India (GIM) and the Forest Fire Protection & Management Scheme (FFPM).

Sridhar Vivan

HEALTH TIP: Replacing high-sodium foods with low-sodium alternatives is a simple first step in losing weight

As it is a rich source of dietary fibre, consumption of cumin relieves flatulence

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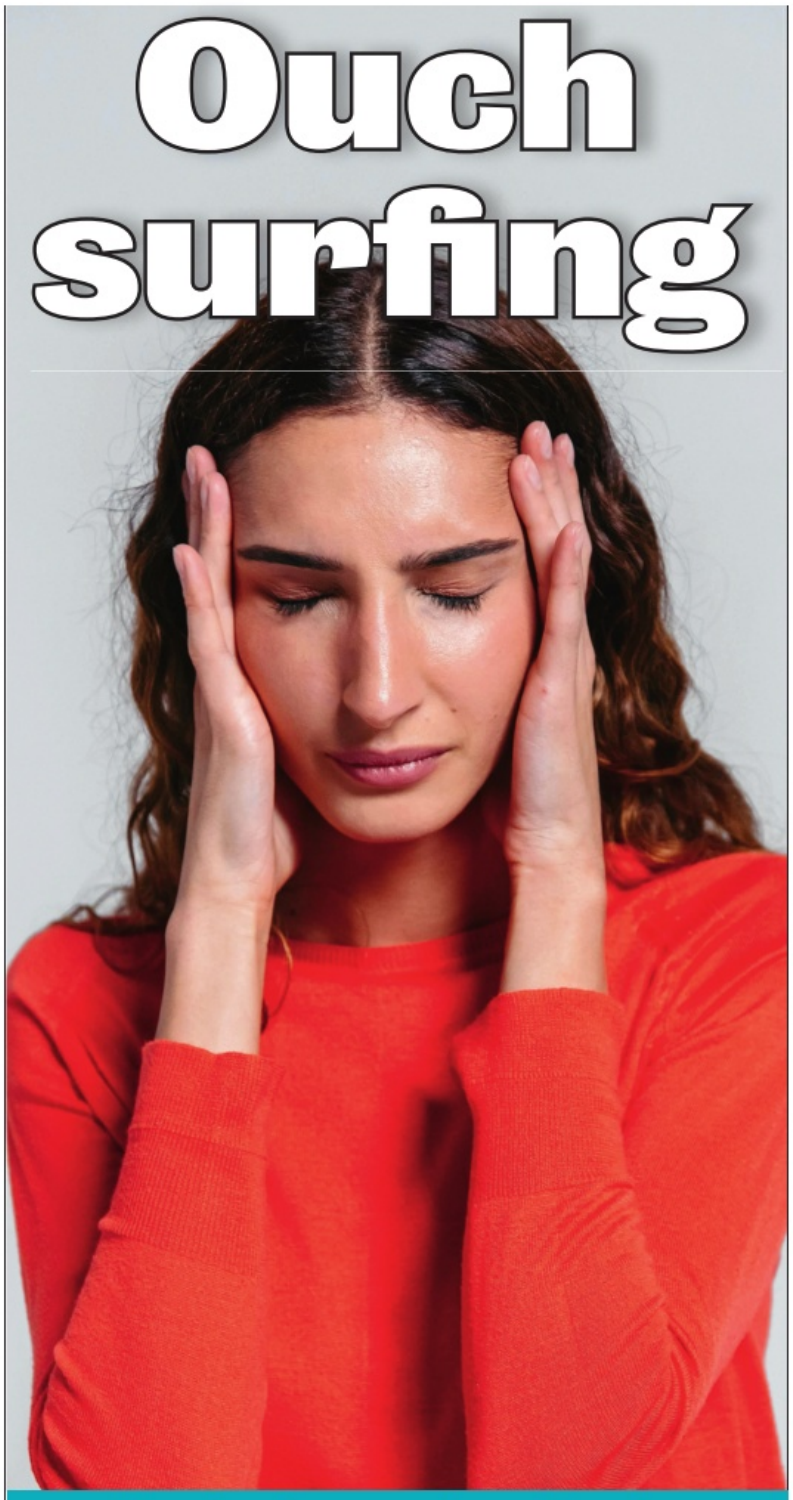
Ouch surfing



How brain can miraculously switch off pain

In the second world war, the physician Henry Beecher observed that some of his soldier patients, despite being injured on the battlefield, required no strong painkillers to manage their pain. In some cases, the injury was as severe as losing part of a limb.

A truly remarkable phenomenon had come into play – the effects of fear, stress and emotion on the brain had switched off their pain. But how does this work – and how can we use it to our advantage?

We all struggle with pain at times. The burning of indigestion, the wince of a scald from the kettle. The sharp stabbing of a sliced finger.

But despite its unpleasantness, pain has a critically important purpose, designed to protect the body rather than harm it. A fundamental concept to first understand is that you do not detect pain – it is a sensation. A sensation that your brain has created – from information it receives from the countless neurons (nerve cells) which supply your skin.

These specialised neurons are called nociceptors – they detect stimuli which are noxious, or potentially damaging to the body. This stimulation might range from a mechanical cut or crush injury, to extreme hot or cold temperatures.

So, if you touch a hot iron, or stand on a sharp nail, the correct reaction is to move your hand or foot away from it. The brain responds to pain by initiating muscle contractions in your arm or leg. In doing so, any further damage is averted.

The course of information, rushing along one neuron to another in a relay, is carried as electrical currents called action potentials. These begin at the skin, travel along nerve highways and into the spinal cord. When the information reaches the uppermost level of the brain – the cerebral cortex – a sensation of pain is generated.

Blocking pain signals

Many different factors can interfere with this transmission of information – we don't perceive pain if the route to the cortex is blocked. Take the use of anaesthetics, for instance.

Local anaesthetics are injected directly into the skin to deactivate nociceptors (like lidocaine) - perhaps in A+E to perform stitches. Other agents induce a loss of consciousness – these are general anaesthetics, for more extensive surgical operations.

Pain is also a very variable experience. Commonly, we ask patients to quantify their pain by giving a value along a scale of nought to ten.

What one person would consider a five out of ten pain, another might consider a seven – and another a two.

Some patients are born without the ability to sense pain – this rare condition is called congenital analgesia. You might think this confers an advantage, but the truth is quite the opposite. These individuals will be unaware of circumstances where their bodies are being damaged, and can end up sustaining more profound injuries, or missing them entirely and suffering the consequences.

How to trick your brain

What is more extraordinary is that we all possess an innate ability to control our pain levels. In fact, a natural painkiller is found deep within the nervous system itself.

The secret lies in a structure located in the very middle of your brain: the periaqueductal grey (PAG). This small, heart-shaped region contains neurons whose role is to alter incoming pain signals reaching the cerebral cortex. In doing so, it is able to dampen down any pain that would otherwise be experienced.

> **Fundamental concept to first understand is that you don't detect pain – it is a sensation that your brain has created – from info it gets from neurons**

Let's consider this in practice using the extreme example of the battlefield. This is an instance where sensing pain might actually prove more of a hindrance than of help. It might hamper a soldier's ability to run, or assist comrades. In temporarily numbing the pain, the soldier becomes able to escape the dangerous environment and seek refuge.

But we encounter many examples of this ability coming into action in our everyday routines. Ever picked something in the kitchen that you suddenly realise is extremely hot? Sometimes that casserole dish or saucepan descends to the floor, but sometimes we are able to hold on just long enough to transfer it to the stove-top. This action may be underpinned by the PAG shutting off the sensation of clasping something too hot to handle, just long enough to prevent dropping it.

The substances which generate this effect are called enkephalins. They are produced in many different areas of the brain (including the PAG) and spinal cord, and may have similar actions to strong analgesics such as morphine. It has also been suggested that long term or chronic pain – which is persistent and not useful to the body – might arise as a result of abnormalities within this natural analgesic system.

This begs the question: how might you go about hacking your own nervous system to produce an analgesic effect?

There is growing evidence to suggest that the release of pain-killing enkephalins can be enhanced in a variety of different ways. Exercise is one example – one of the reasons why prescribed exercise might be able to work wonders for aches and pains (backache for instance) instead of popping paracetamols.

Besides this, stressful situations, feeding and sex might also affect the activity of enkephalins and other related compounds.

So, how could we go about it? Take up strength or endurance training? Alleviate our stress? Good food? Good sex? While more work is needed to clarify a role for these options in pain management, their reward might be greater than we thought.

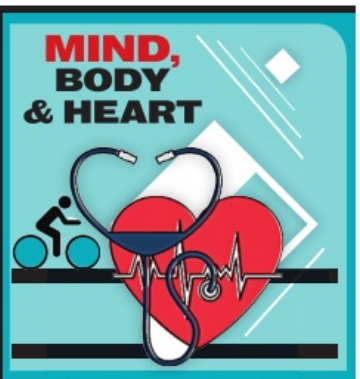
Pain remains a complex, poorly understood experience, but the future is bright. Only last month, the FDA approved the use of a new medication Journavx for managing acute pain.

It works by switching off nociceptors in the peripheral nervous system, and therefore preventing pain signals getting to the brain. This represents a potential new breakthrough in a world which has become dependent on addictive opioid medications, such as morphine and fentanyl.

Developing new painkilling treatments relies on the work of pain researchers to help unravel the intricate neuronal circuitry and function. There is no denying that this is going to be difficult task.

But in considering the neuroscience of how our bodies generate and suppress pain, we can hope to understand how they can act as their own healers.

(By Dan Baumgardt, University of Bristol, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Taste receptors in heart

Sweet taste
Researchers have found that the heart possesses "sweet taste" receptors, similar to those on our tongues, and stimulating these receptors with sweet substances can modulate the heartbeat.

Heart muscle
The discovery opens new avenues for understanding heart function and potentially for developing novel treatments for heart failure. The new research found that these receptors are not just present on heart muscle but also functional.

Artificial sweetener detector
When the researchers stimulated these receptors in both human and mouse heart cells using aspartame, a common artificial sweetener, they observed a significant increase in the force of heart muscle contraction and accelerated calcium handling – key processes for a healthy heartbeat.
While taste receptors are traditionally associated with the tongue and our ability to perceive flavours,
recent studies have shown that these receptors exist in other parts of the body, where they likely play different roles.
This new study is the first to identify specific "sweet taste" receptors, known as TAS1R2 and TAS1R3, on the surface of heart muscle cells.

Racing heart
"After you eat a meal, it's been shown that your heart rate and blood pressure actually are increasing," said Micah Yoder, a graduate student in the lab of Jonathan Kirk at Loyola University Chicago.
Previously, this was thought to be a neural axis that's being signaled.
"But we're proposing a more direct consequence, where we have a spike in our blood sugar after eating a meal, and that's binding to these sweet taste receptors on the heart muscle cells, causing a difference in the heartbeat," he added. **–IANS**

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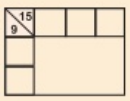
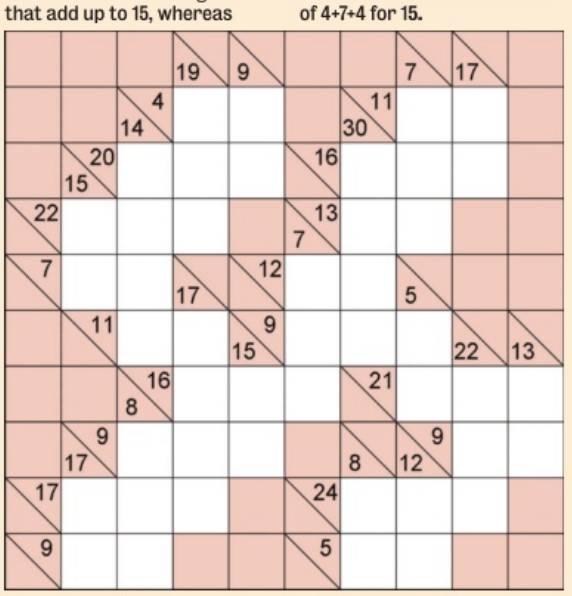
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

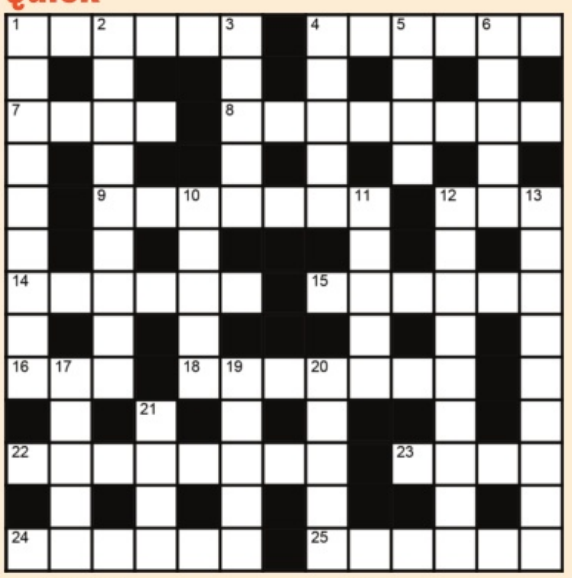


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Mollycoddle (6)
4 Saintly lady of Kolkata, Mother ___ (6)
7 Wander about aimlessly (4)
8 Substituted (8)
9 Cinema in the Banashankari area (7)
12 Get into (3)
14 Vast seas (6)
15 Large spade (6)
16 Nautical direction (3)
18 More retiring (7)
22 M in M S Dhoni (8)
23 Audio system (2-2)
24 Rip to pieces (4,2)
25 Degrees or phases (6)

DOWN

1 Malignant tumour (9)
2 Speech, talk or utterance (9)
3 Chuck (5)
4 Sot or drunkard (5)
5 Spielberg's Saving Private ___ (4)
6 First monkey's advice : __ __ evil (3,2)
10 Sharpened by whetting (5)
11 A watery discharge from a wound (5)
12 Deflecting or turning aside (9)
13 Invalidates (9)
17 Visible burning of gas (5)
19 Finish (3,2)
20 Famous mountain range in Russia (5)
21 Equipment, apparatus, tackle, etc.? (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: S EQUALS T

SUN YHLKRGSPHK HY NZNBE DSGSN PD SUN NRLWGSPHK HY PSD EHLSU.

Linemaro

I am sure someone treasures a lock of your hair

Mindchow

Success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines, practiced every day

Joke of the day

Everybody should pay their taxes with a smile, said Bob. I tried it, but they wanted cash

Loop

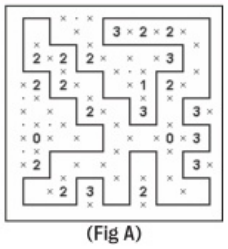
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

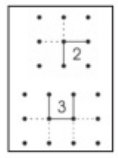
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

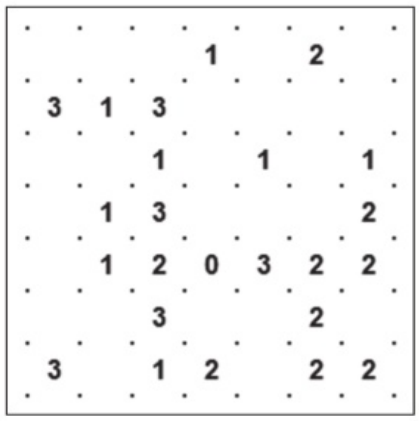
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



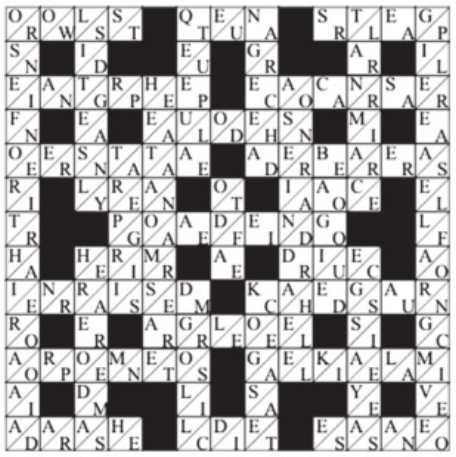
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



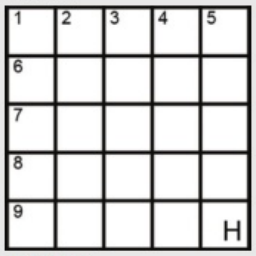
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

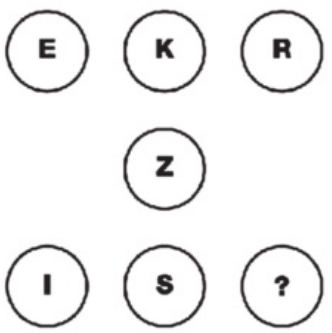
1 All II; 6 Gen id;
7 Ulna I; 8 Gores;
9 Not MH

DOWN

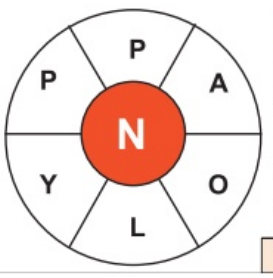
1 I mod I; 2 Log in;
3 Run-in; 4 Gel at;
5 Hales

Mensapuzzle

What is missing from the last circle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

04 Average; 05 Good; 07 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		1		7				
	7	2					9	8
6			3		2	7		
	5				8			1
4			7		1			3
8			5				2	
		5	9		4			7
9	2					8	5	
				8		4		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 4

3 5 7 9

Medium = 9

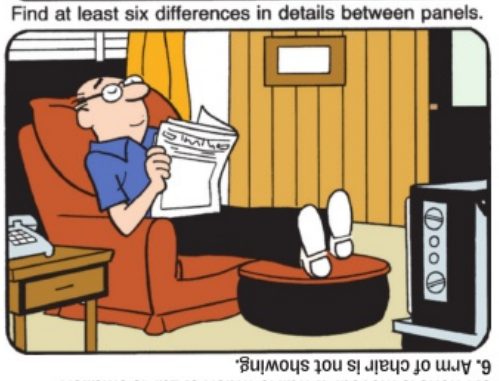
3 4 8 8

Hard = 25

2 3 7 2

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



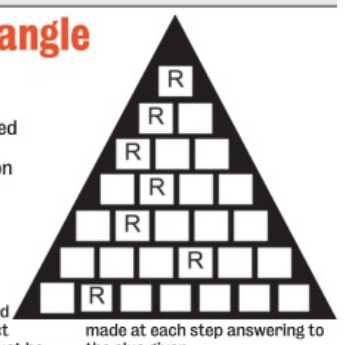
Differences: 1. Table leg is moved. 2. Drawer is larger. 3. Phone is moved. 4. Wall is wider. 5. Ear is smaller. 6. Arm of chair is not showing.

Riddler

Recorded by three hands, I have no bounds. People use me constantly, My vastness astounds. I'm used around the world, Organized by ancient cultures. Through me all things happen, Children become geezers.

Alpha triangle

1 18th letter
2 Again, prefix
3 Feel sorrow
4 Companion of tried
5 Cruel person
6 Capital of Lebanon
7 Testimonial



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye

MS. BUNNY SEZ HER PATER IS PROSPECTIN' FER GOLD!
THAT'S STRANGE!
THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING IN THIS HOLE!
?
?
OH, MERCY! I AM ABOUT TO BE DEVOURED BY AN UNCIVILIZED WINGED BEAST!
WHAT A BASE, UNCULTURED END TO MY SEARCH FOR PATER!!
5-22

Bizarrotrip

Every birthday, I get a laser pointer, yarn or an empty box.
Anything's better than worms.
Dist. by King Features
BIZARRO.COM
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11-12-24

Diamond Lil

And now, a word from the National Council on Automobile Passengers:
SHOTGUN
This has been a word from the National Council on Automobile Passengers.
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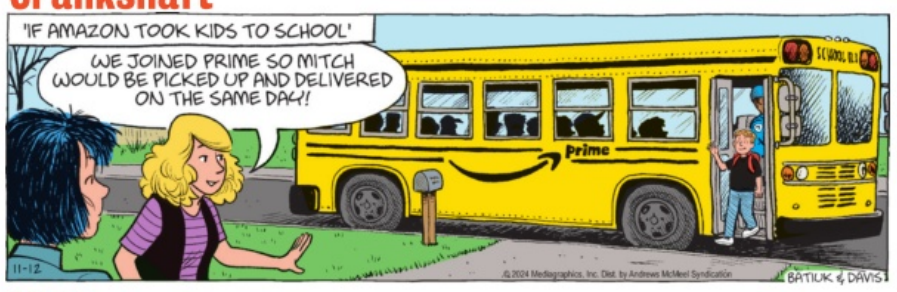
www.creators.com

Hart of the city

broad street LOOPS
VOLUNTEER TODAY
ALL ARE WELCOME HERE
HEY! THEY DO FREE MENDING!
YEAH! THAT'S WHERE I MET BRITT AND SHE GAVE ME SOME SEWING TIPS!
WE SHOULD VOLUNTEER TO DO SOME MENDING.
GREAT IDEA! I'D LOVE TO GIVE BACK.
AND I LOVE TO VOLUNTEER!
IT'S A DATE!

Crankshaft


'IF AMAZON TOOK KIDS TO SCHOOL'
WE JOINED PRIME SO MITCH WOULD BE PICKED UP AND DELIVERED ON THE SAME DAY!
Prime
SCHOOL BUS
11-12
BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may experience mental peace and spend quality time with friends and family. Your domestic life will be enjoyable, strengthening your bond with your spouse. A new business partnership may emerge, and innovative ideas could help your business grow. Disputes in existing partnerships may now be resolved.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Good health will bring happiness today, and any past health concerns are likely to be resolved. You may gain control over unnecessary expenses, and new sources of income could open up, boosting your financial health. Singles may find a soulmate within their community.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
With the moon in a positive position, you will feel energetic and perform efficiently at work. Helping someone in need will enhance your reputation. You may spend time on intellectual pursuits or even consider higher education to advance your career.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Until evening, you may feel impatient and lack confidence, affecting your work. Concerns over your parents' health and children's behavior may add stress. Try to stay focused and avoid spreading your energy too thin. Risky investments should be avoided for now.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Happiness surrounds you today, and you may plan an overseas work-related trip, which could benefit your business in the near future. Spending on luxury items may enhance your lifestyle, but avoid excessive indulgence in glamour or addictions, as they could negatively impact your finances.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
It's important to control your speech today, as harsh words may disrupt family harmony. You might spend money on unnecessary purchases to maintain social status, but it is advised to be mindful of your expenses.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Your focus today will be on your child's career or extracurricular activities. Seeking advice from professionals or consultants may help in making important career decisions. Good news regarding your child's academic results is likely. You may also consider investing in a family business.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Be cautious with your words today and remain alert to hidden enemies or opponents, as there is a risk of conspiracy. Avoid investing in risky assets or lending money, as recovery may be difficult. Meditation and yoga can help reduce stress. Lovebirds should avoid unnecessary arguments. Students are advised to work hard.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Job seekers may find new opportunities, and those already employed may receive promotions. Business owners may gain new clients, boosting profitability. Singles are likely to meet a compatible partner. In domestic life, honesty is crucial as hiding things from your spouse may create distance in your relationship.

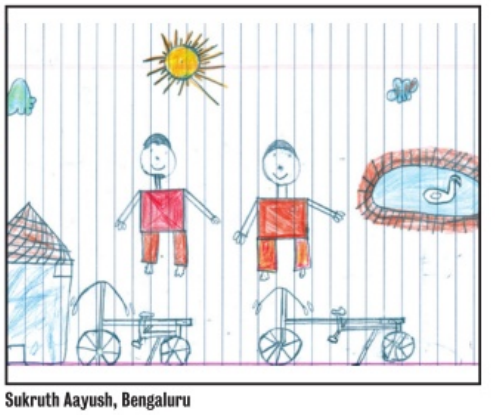
Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today brings success in your professional life, with plans yielding positive results. Past investments may bring financial gains. Your creativity will enhance your professional skills. Job seekers are likely to find suitable employment, and students will improve their focus through self-analysis. You will also better understand your spouse's feelings.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
The day may start with some emotional turmoil, but by the afternoon, blessings from elders will help you overcome challenges. Your willpower will help complete delayed projects. Avoid arguments in your domestic life. By evening, you may see financial gains from past investments.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
A negative moon may impact your well-being today, potentially causing health issues. Avoid investing in new business ventures, as losses are possible. Students should stay focused on studies instead of getting lost in fantasies. Caution is advised while driving to prevent accidents.

KIDZONE

Serin Alex, Bengaluru



Sukruth Aayush, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
(((16−4)×2) / (4×3×2×1))
24/24=1

BULL'S EYE
loan, nappy, only, PANOPLY, plan, pony, pylon

STRIKE OUT

O	W	L	S		O	U	A	S	T	E
N	I		U	R		A		L		
E	N	T	R	E		C	O	A	R	S
F	A		A	U	D	E	N		M	A
O	R	N	A	T	E		D	E	B	A
R		Y	E	N		O		A	O	C
T		G	O	A	D	I	N	G		F
H	H	I	M		E		D	I	E	O
E	R	A	S	E	D		C	A	E	S
R	R		A	R	E	E	L		S	
O	P	E	N	T	O		A	L	K	A
A	M		L		S			Y		V
D	A	S	H		L	I	E		E	S

QUICK

C	O	S	S	E	T		T	E	R	E
A		T		H		O		Y		E
R	O	A	M		R	E	P	L	A	C
C		T		O		E		N		N
I		E	S	H	W	A	R	I		D
N		M		O		C		I		U
O	C	E	A	N	S		S	H	O	V
M		N		E		O		E		L
A	F	T		D	E	M	U	R	E	R
L		G		N		R		T		F
M	A	H	E	N	D	R	A		H	I
A		L		U		L		N		E
R	O	A	M		R	E	P	L	A	C
C		T		O		E		N		N
I		E	S	H	W	A	R	I		D
N		M		O		C		I		U
O	C	E	A	N	S		S	H	O	V
M		N		E		O		E		L
A	F	T		D	E	M	U	R	E	R
L		G		N		R		T		F
M	A	H	E	N	D	R	A		H	I
A		L		U		L		N		E
T	E	A	R	U	P		S	T	A	G

MENSA PUZZLE
D. Starting at the top left and moving in a Z shape around the diagram, the numerical value of the letters increases by 6, then 7, then 8 etc.

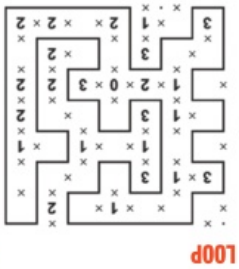
QUOTE UNCODE
The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.

SUDOKU

5	4	1	8	7	9	3	6	2
3	7	2	4	5	6	1	9	8
6	9	8	3	1	2	7	4	5
2	5	3	6	4	8	9	7	1
4	6	9	7	2	1	5	8	3
8	1	7	5	9	3	6	2	4
1	8	5	9	6	4	2	3	7
9	2	4	1	3	7	8	5	6
7	3	6	2	8	5	4	1	9

ALPHA TRIANGLE
R, Re, Rue, True, Brute, Beirut, Tribute.

LOOP



GO FIGURE
Easy
9 − 7 − 3 + 5 = 4
Medium
8 + 8 − 3 − 4 = 9
Hard
2 × 2 × 7 − 3 = 25

KAKURO

RIDDLER
Time.

FAST FIVE

I	L	I	A	L
D	I	N	G	E
I	N	U	L	A
O	G	R	E	S
M	O	N	T	H

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Genelia enjoys Sunday with parent squad

Actress Genelia D'Souza is a hands-on mom to her two boys, Riaan and Rahyl. Recently, Genelia spent her Sunday watching her younger one, Rahyl playing a match with his team.

Dropping a video of the team celebrating on her IG stories, Genelia D'Souza wrote, "N when your Sunday looks like this = Pure joy, great bunch of supportive kids and endless early mornings on the weekend for the parent squad".

Prior to this, Genelia thanked her father for encouraging her to grow up with sports and for teaching her to never give up in life. Taking to her Instagram, she posted a couple of happy photos with her daddy, and shared, "I didn't grow up with satin bows and rainbows I grew up with sports, which back then no one encouraged their daughters to do because it wasn't considered girly enough." She added, "Thank you Pops for coming with me all those early morning practises and insisting I did it, even though there were times I wanted to give up - But what I didn't know was, I was getting was life lessons ..." **–IANS**

Meet the parents?

Buzz is that Kriti may soon be tying the knot with rumoured beau Kabir

Kriti Sanon is once again making headlines for her rumoured relationship with London-based entrepreneur Kabir Bahia. Though the duo has never officially confirmed their romance, they are frequently spotted together, keeping fans and media buzzing with speculation. Recently, Kriti and Kabir were seen arriving at Delhi airport, fueling rumours about a possible wedding.The actress attempted to keep a low profile, covering her face with a mask, cap, and sunglasses. Despite her efforts to go incognito, she looked effortlessly chic in a white top, blue denim, and a black jacket. Meanwhile, Kabir complemented her style with an all-black ensemble, donning a simple t-shirt, matching pants, and shoes. Their coordinated outfits and chemistry screamed 'couple goals.'

Reports suggest that Kriti and Kabir have traveled to Delhi to meet family, adding more weight to ongoing wedding rumours. If speculations are to be believed, the couple might tie the knot by the end of 2025.

Earlier, Kriti and Kabir were spotted at a wedding in Bengaluru, where they appeared inseparable. A slightly blurred viral video from the event captured the deeply engaged in conversation, dressed in matching black outfits. Kabir was seen staying close to the actress as they interacted with guests, adding to the buzz surrounding their alleged romance.

–ETimes

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

In the director's chair

Kishan Balnad is excited to watch his maiden movie Olavina Payana at a theater. The film is scheduled to arrive in theaters on February 21. Balnad has been associated with Sandalwood for 17 years.

"My aim was to realise my long-cherished dream of becoming a director. I struggled a lot all these years. I did odd jobs for survival in Sandalwood. Now, I am very happy to realise my dream. I will remain grateful to my friend and well-wisher Sunil for introducing me to producer Nagaraj S Mulagunda," said Balnad.

The director said the movie was shot in and around Virajpet and Bengaluru. "The producer wrote the script for this move. Sai Sarvesh has scored the music. The movie has three songs. Rajesh Krishnan, Veer Samarth and Sai Sarvesh have sung the songs," he said.

Sunil, who has acted in tele serials and played small characters in a few Kannada movies, debuts as a hero with Olavina Payana that revolves around a youth from a middle-class family and his journey of love. "I used to work at a company owned by Nagaraj S Mulagunda who wanted to bankroll a movie. Later, I introduced Balnad to him," he said.

Career detour

Jagadish, who hails from Koppa in Mandya and began his career as an auto rickshaw driver in Bengaluru, has become a movie director. His passion for movies made him come to Bengaluru in 1996 and work as auto rickshaw driver to make ends meet.

"I worked with P Seshadri for the movie Samara. Seshadri sir was associate director for the movie. I worked as an assistant director. I made my debut as an independent director with the College College," said Jagadish.

The muhurat function of Jagadiah's latest movie KA-11-1977 was held at Sri Malai Mahadeshwara Swamy Temple recently. National award-winning director P Seshadri sounded the clapboard. After a gap of 14 years, Jagadish makes a comeback as a director with this movie.

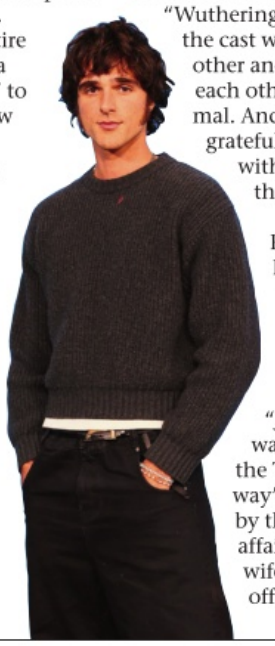
"Jagadish calls me his guru. I am not a guru to anyone. We have to be busy with our work. He worked with me for the Samara. Recently, he began acting in movies but I advised him to focus on direction," Seshadri said.

Out of a fairytale

Kiara redefines red-carpet fashion with her array of fascinating cocktail gowns

Watch this story come alive on your device by scanning this QR code

Weight loss wasn't 'complete torture'



Actor Jacob Elordi had to lose weight to play a prisoner of war in the new Justin Kurzel-directed series 'The Narrow Road to the Deep North', but the actor says, for him, it wasn't a "complete torture," Variety reported.

He shared that the entire weight loss process was "a very calming experience" to go through with his fellow cast members, whom he affectionately called "the lads."

"I think there was something quite profound that happened, in that it wasn't complete torture," he said at a Berlin Film Festival press conference. "There was a peace that sort of came over all of us. And you kind of reach a level of love that goes beyond what you're used to because everything gets stripped away, and you come down to the bare bones of, 'Is my mate OK? Am I OK? How can I help? Do you want a jelly-bean?'"

Elordi, who was sporting sideburns (perhaps for his latest role as Heathcliff in Emerald Fennell's "Wuthering Heights"?), said the cast was "watching each other and taking care of each other, so it became primal. And I'm just really grateful to have shared that with these lads," as per the outlet.

Based on Richard Flanagan's Booker Prize-winning novel, 'The Narrow Road to the Deep North' follows medical officer Dorrigo Evans, a "Japanese prisoner of war forced to work on the Thai-Burma railway" who is "haunted by the memory of his affair with his uncle's wife, Amy," per to an official synopsis. **–ANI**